



News Release

PO Box 360, Trenton, N.J. 08625-0360

Heather Howard,
Commissioner

For Release:
March 2, 2009

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DHSS Proposes an Amendment and New Rules at N.J.A.C. 8:25, New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Standards

The Consumer and Environmental Health Services of the Division of Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health of the Public Health Services Branch of the Department of Health and Senior Services (Department) is proposing an amendment and new rules at N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2, establishing youth camp staff screening requirements. The notice of proposal appears in the March 2, 2009 issue of the *New Jersey Register*.

N.J.A.C. 8:25 implements the requirements of the New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Act set forth at N.J.S.A. 26:12-1 et seq. (P.L. 1973, c. 375) by establishing minimum standards to protect the health and safety of children that attend private day and residential youth camps. The Department initiates this rulemaking in response to public comments received on the Department's recent notice of proposal, including new rules on youth camp staff screening requirements. (40 N.J.R. 4888(a), September 2, 2008)

After considering the public's suggestions and conducting additional research, the Department determined that it was necessary to revise the proposed new rules on criminal history and sex offender registry checks in order to better communicate the staff screening requirements and to alleviate, as appropriate, some of the challenges that youth camps would have encountered in complying with the requirements as proposed.

Since some of the necessary revisions would have been too substantive to make an adoption (the notice of adoption is also published in the March 2, 2009 issue of the *New Jersey Register*), the Department initiates this rulemaking to propose new rules for staff screening at N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2. The Department proposes to make the new rules operative on June 15, 2010.

In particular, the Department proposes an amendment at N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2 to remove the existing staff screening requirements. The Department proposes new rules at N.J.A.C. 8:25-3.2 to establish the following requirements for staff screening: a review of prior employment history for new staff members, the contents of the employment history, three character reference checks with references that are not related to the staff member, the schedule for conducting a criminal history check for adult staff members, the circumstances when a notarized statement as specified in the rules is sufficient in place of a new criminal history check, an annual sex offender registry check for each staff member and recordkeeping.

The public has until May 1, 2009 to comment on the notice of proposal. Persons wishing to comment on the proposal must submit their comments in writing to Ruth Charbonneau, Director, Office of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Health and Senior Services, PO Box 360, Trenton, NJ 08625-0360. Written comments on the proposal must be postmarked on or before May 1, 2009, which is the close of the 60-day public comment period.

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